Guidelines for Accessible Printed Materials

Accessibility...

Equally effective communication of information to all audiences and age groups, but specifically related to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, where King County is required to ensure equally effective communication to all individuals served, including qualified individuals with disabilities.

King County has a demonstrated commitment to ensure that everyone it serves has equal access to and opportunity to benefit from its programs and services, including people with disabilities. In addition, King County must comply with federal, state and local disability access laws. An important part of King County's programs and services is the information it provides in printed materials. By following these guidelines, you will help ensure that your publications meet legal requirements and be accessible to most people with disabilities, while also providing greater readability for those with English as a second language.

Access Notices

Here are situations where these notices are legally required to appear. They should be in a sans serif font, 14 point or larger type.*

- **All publications written for the public (programs and services brochures, flyers, reports, etc.)** – A notice that the publication is available in alternate formats upon request. This notice should include a contact telephone number and TTY number.

- **Publications that outline county services, programs or activities in which the public participates** – A notice that reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. The notice should include a contact telephone number and TTY number.

- **Publications concerning a public meeting, hearing or event** – A notice that the meeting/event location is accessible (check to ensure facility meets access codes).

*Please see the Office of Civil Rights resources section below for optional wording of required notices.

Disability access laws do not include specifications for printed materials, allowing for flexibility; however, governmental and disability organizations have developed guidelines to help ensure compliance with the intent of the law.

Font And Text

- **Style:** use sans-serif fonts such as Arial and Helvetica and limit use of ornate fonts. Times New Roman and other serif fonts may be more difficult for some to read.

- **Size:** 12-point type or larger (Large print size: 14-point or larger upon request).

- **Non-standard type:** Use bold, underlining or italics only for emphasis or headers. Use all-caps sparingly.

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- **Background images:** Generally, none; if used, be sure images do not obscure text. It is helpful to put contrasting "shadow" (positive or negative) directly under the text to increase contrast.
- **Shading behind text:** Acceptable, but be sure to achieve adequate text-to-background contrast.
- **Text around images:** If text is wrapped around an image, it is better to put the image to the right of the text, so there is a consistent margin at the left for easier "tracking."

Paragraph
- **Style:** Block style (one line between paragraphs) or indented first line.
- **Line width:** Single column not exceeding 6 inches; multiple columns at least 3 inches wide.
- **Justification/alignment:** Left alignment or limited justification (large print: left alignment only)
- **Hyphenation:** None or limited.
- **Leading:** Sufficient spacing between lines of print so lines are not crowded.

Paper and Printing
- **Color contrast:** Good contrast between print and background color; avoid dark or intense color paper (such as neon) or colors that are the same as or similar to ink color used.
- **Paper finish:** Matte (dull, not shiny, as glare can make a publication unreadable by some).
- **Double-sided copies:** One-sided copying recommended for large print, unless heavy-weight paper is used.

Telephone and TTY Numbers*
- **Hyphens:** Use hyphens only (no parentheses around area code).
- **TTY number:** If no in-house TTY number, use "TTY Relay: 711."

* Use TTY (not TDD) for Text Telephone (see "TTY is the Acronym for Text Telephone - But Why?" at http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/ttyhistory.htm).

Any caller may dial 711 nationwide to be connected to the nearest TTY Relay Service.

Office Of Civil Rights Intranet Resources

Alternate formats overview
kcweb.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/altforms.htm
See "Notification of Availability of Alternate Formats"

Public meetings and hearings – Announce accessibility
http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/announce.htm
See "How to Indicate That Reasonable Accommodations
are Available"

Access symbols
(from wheelchair access symbol to interpreter services symbol)
http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/symbol.htm
http://www.gag.org/resources/das.php
(offers positive and negative versions)

Disability language and etiquette
(to help make sure you say it appropriately)
http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/etiquette.htm

Illustration of accessible print features
http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/poster.pdf

Internet Resources

Effective color contrast, Lighthouse International
http://www.lighthouse.org/color_contrast.htm

Print legibility, Lighthouse International
http://www.lighthouse.org/print_leg.htm

*Note: Please disregard the use of a serif font – sans serif font is
strongly preferred by consensus of guidelines sources, as noted
above.*

If you have any questions about these guidelines, or would like
feedback on a draft design, please contact:

> Disability Compliance Specialist and King County ADA
> Coordinator, 206-296-7706, 206-296-7596 TTY